



Vagablonde

Anna Dorn

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In Anna Dorn's *Vagablonde*, Prue, a Los Angeles lawyer, hopes to wean herself off of various psychotropic prescriptions.

Prue is also an aspiring rapper, despite the fact that she is bourgeois and has “the coloring of a Nazi.” As Prue’s musical success intensifies, her sense of stability deteriorates. Her nurturing girlfriend, Ellie, moves to New York, and Prue spends much of her time with Jax Jameson and his “Kingdom,” a cadre of creative artists similar, as Prue notes, to Andy Warhol’s famed pop culture Factory. Jax produces music featuring Prue in her *Vagablonde* rapper persona—bleached blonde and outright white—joined by other musicians in a group called Shiny AF.

Though her work with Jax, a wild-eyed, quasi “shaman” fond of tribal tunics and work boots, is liberating and well received, the Kingdom holds marathon partying sessions that take a toll on Prue. Her musical efforts are at the mercy of social media’s hyped mass adoration or condemnation, increasing her sense of anxious exposure.

Beyond the hothouse atmosphere of Jax’s Kingdom and the surreal backdrop of Los Angeles, *Vagablonde*’s jagged, prismatic humor both deflects and reveals Prue’s emotions. Prue, with her insecurities, talents, ambiguities, and flaws, is a captivating narrator. She compartmentalizes her legal work, writing briefs with skill between episodes of substance abuse. Obsessed with astrology, she idolizes Gemini musicians Tupac Shakur, Kanye West, and Lana Del Rey. In her own artistic expressions, Prue “tackles queer erasure with a self-aware swagger,” rapping like an auto-tuned, “seductive alien.”

Peopled with vibrant characters amid searing yellow skies and cobalt twilight, *Vagablonde* is a glimpse into a rarefied, “of the moment” world, with a heroine who, like other famed platinum blondes before her, hides her troubled vulnerability behind the icy whiteness of her hair.

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